

VETERAN: Bill Buechsenschuetz

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BRIAN TOBER: Today is April 24th, 2012. We're interviewing Bill Buechsenschuetz at the Illinois State Library. Bill is 72-years-old, having been born on October 21st, 1939. My name is Brian Tober. I'll be doing the interview.

Bill, for the record, could you state what branch of service and which war you served in.

BILL BUECHSENSCHUETZ: I was in the Army, United States Army, in Vietnam.

TOBER: All right. And what was your rank?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: When I was in Vietnam, I was first lieutenant. I retired as a lieutenant colonel.

TOBER: And where did you serve? I mean in Vietnam -- anywhere else?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Well, our base camp was at Cu Chi, which is outside of -- well, it's quite away outside of Saigon. We operated in Chi Linh, Dau Tieng, and then spent -- went down and opened up the Delta and then we moved into the Delta.

TOBER: And what was your job or assignment in the Army?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: The first six months in Vietnam I was a platoon leader, rifle platoon leader, and then the last six months I was the company exec officer.

Throughout my whole career I {excuse me} -- I

started out down at Fort Leonard Wood as a training officer. Well, actually I started out as an enlisted and went to OCS, but spent a little over a year in Germany with the 7th Calvary.

TOBER: Where were you in Germany?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Schweinfurt. And after I came back I went back to Fort Leonard Wood for awhile and then I went off active duty. I stayed in the reserve system and retired from there.

TOBER: And when you're in Vietnam were there many casualties in your unit?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: I would tell you that I was very fortunate. In my platoon I never lost anybody, several people wounded, never lost anyone, and a lot of close ones.

TOBER: Yeah.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Big problem was snipers.

TOBER: Was it?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, it was a -- where we were operating was open area, much like walking through a corn field, you know, or a bean field, you know, where they see you for a long distance.

TOBER: Right.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: And they tended to look for the radio operator and then very simply count one ahead of you and that

was who they went after. So -- yeah.

TOBER: Could you tell us about a couple of your more memorable experiences?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Well, there was probably one time down in the Delta where we were walking and I -- walking down a rice stipe and the sniper opened up on us. And he was going for me because I was the one in front. He put it past my left ear.

TOBER: Oh, wow.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: -- which I have lost considerable hearing. Put it past my right -- the right ear of my RTO, who was about 10 feet behind me, and he's lost hearing in his right ear, and put a nasty rug burn across the chest of an NCO that was about another 25 yards behind me. That didn't really hurt him. It just creased him. I always thought that sniper was probably the most unlucky guy.

TOBER: Wow.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: If he had decided to shoot --

TOBER: Uh-huh.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: -- you know, they always shot for your head because they wanted to send you home where your mother couldn't see you.

TOBER: Yeah.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: And -- but if he had lowered his point

of aim a little bit why he would have made it.

TOBER: Wow.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: But, you know, it was kind of, I would say kind of funny. But he had three of us lined up and he had to put it between all three of us within an inch or two.

TOBER: And it affected your hearing you think?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah. Right now my hearing aid is not working, but I wear a hearing aid in my left ear, yeah.

I don't know -- I mean there's all kinds of things that happened, you know, that's --

TOBER: Yeah.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: You know --

TOBER: Do you want to share any other experiences? I mean --

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Well, I don't know. I would say I'm real prejudiced right now against reporters.

TOBER: Okay.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah. I found -- which rarely ever happened that you were identified in the newspapers back home, but this guy did, and he wrote an article about me, not by name but he identified the unit and everything, no question who he was talking about, and it was -- I guess what it revealed to me was the jaundice that they -- that they -- they wrote, how they wrote, because it bore no resemblance as to

what happened.

TOBER: And this was during -- this was written during the war then?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah. He left out the important things and added a little bit to the things that -- to turn them so that they were wrong but -- and it was published. It was syndicated throughout the country.

TOBER: It was a local reporter then?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: No, no.

TOBER: Okay.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: It was on a national scale.

TOBER: Okay.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah, it was on a national scale. Somebody saw it, identified the unit, mailed it to my company commander, and my company commander came down and handed it to me, and said this is one of your friends. And I told him that never ever send another reporter out with me because I couldn't guarantee safety.

TOBER: Yeah.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: No, I -- you know it's -- there's all kinds of things that happened but, you know, it's -- I don't know.

TOBER: Were you awarded any medals or citations?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Bronze star.

TOBER: Bronze star?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah.

TOBER: Can you share any of your battle planning with us?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Battle planning?

TOBER: Uh-huh.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Well, really everything was done pretty much on a routine basis. You left -- flew to a spot somewhere and depending on how long you're going to be gone, you were usually flown out, landed, and we would spend two to three days moving through an area that you're just trying to search. It's kind of search and destroy. And you're looking for anything in the houses. You do a search of homes. You do a search of anything that comes along and you watch for the people.

That story that I was telling you about they sent a squad out and they recovered four people, two women and two men. You always retained -- detained men who would fall between the age groups of about 16 to 50, somewhere in there, people that you might consider of military age or capability and if they didn't have an ID.

And anyway -- yeah, and just to kind of relate what happened, two of the guys turned out to be VC. And, well -- and I had already picked one up on the LZ when I landed. This

poor guy was walking along and all of a sudden we landed beside him and he fell into our perimeter. So we held onto him until we got the police out there, national police. They came out and checked him out. And he had a whole lot more money on him than an average Vietnamese normally would have, a very large roll of bills. It turned out he was the pay master for the local VC units. Obviously we detained him.

And -- but the other two ended up -- see later on -- what really set the thing off was the two women didn't have ID cards. For us it was very difficult to look at a Vietnamese and say how old are they. Well, the older woman was too old and did not need one. She was old enough she didn't have to have an ID card anymore.

The younger one was a young lady -- was too young. She had -- she was not quite 16 when you had to have an ID card. But we retained both of them -- detained both of them and brought them in for that reason.

The girl had stepped on something. The VC used to plant things in the nails, you know, in boards and whatnot in the rice paddies, and she apparently had stepped on one. She was about to lose a foot due to infection. We kept them overnight and shipped her back to our medics. And, you know, she had -- probably the first time she had seen a doctor in her life. And they cleaned up her foot, gave her tetanus shot

and antibiotics and so on. And we let the two women go obviously. But all four of 'em -- everybody in my platoon dug into their C rations for the night to feed all four of them. So --

TOBER: So then would you go back to base camp every time or did they take you from one spot to the next or did you always return?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah. You always went back to a base camp somewhere. Yeah. And at Cu Chi we had a very large base camp. That was a division base camp. But normally what you did is you went out and established a firebase somewhere. And if you could you brought artillery in there. And then from there you moved out in the surrounding area and just you just went out and looked for -- you know, on occasion -- and I found out on occasion why we -- you were bait. Take a small unit and send it out somewhere and see if the VC or NVA would take the bait and attack you.

TOBER: Oh, wow.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: And then you hoped that the support that you were supposed to get you were going to get. This usually happened at night.

TOBER: Oh, wow.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: So, yeah, I mean that was, you know -- that was usually the times that things were the tightest is

when you got sent out like that and you just waited to see if somebody was going to come along and -- because you knew if they came at you they were going to come at you with more than what you had. That was the whole idea --

TOBER: Right.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: -- is that you went out there with a small enough force and it looked like an enticing target. And so, yeah, that was probably the -- that was probably the thing I didn't like the most.

TOBER: Yeah. You knew when this was happening, I mean, after awhile probably?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Most times, yeah, you finally figured it out that that's what you were doing. And I mean the worse time -- the worse time was they pulled me in and resupplied real quick, got back on helicopters, and -- see we were down in the Delta. There was no support down there. We were -- the support was all ours.

TOBER: Okay.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah. Nobody -- nobody could reach us and -- with artillery or anything like that. It had to be the Air Force or the gun ships or something. And they told me they were sending me out where we knew there had been a regimen running around and I was going to be a very enticing target. My platoon normally would have been 40 people and I

was down to about 24 and I said we were going to be a very enticing target.

TOBER: So was all of your transportation with helicopters or then on foot or --

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah. You went out -- yeah, you flew out wherever and then from that point on you were on your own. You were walking. Yeah. And -- but, yeah, it was -- you know, like I said, you just went out and started walking and that's why the snipers were no good because --

TOBER: Yeah.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: -- they could see you coming for some distance. It got to the point where I called my platoon sergeants in one day -- or my squad sergeants and squad leaders in, said we were going to change the operation a little bit. I said "come on in." I laid my map on the ground. I said get up here and take a look at it. I want to show you what we're going to do. They said, no, sir, we're just going to stand back over here. Nobody would get any closer to you than this. So, yeah -- and they did. They did not get -- they wouldn't get close to me. So --

TOBER: During your time there, can you tell us about staying in touch with family? Were you able to stay in touch with family while you were there?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Um, yeah, you could. I don't know that

I did a particularly good job of me staying in touch with them. But the real problem was that when you went out you didn't carry any more with you than you just absolutely had to. And you didn't get mail and you didn't mail anything. And we did not take mail out with us simply because if something happened to somebody we did not want home addresses and that sort of thing falling into anybody's hands or you just inadvertently dropping it because they were -- you know -- it found its way back into the United States and, let's face it, the people back here were not that supportive of what was going on. So -- and they would -- they would potentially harass your family if they knew who you were and where you were.

It was -- I tell you there was one -- I think you know if we're recording it like this -- one thing in that relationship to people back here supporting you. The battalion had a firebase and this was after I was an exec officer. Anyway, we sent out patrols. And one night -- they were ambush patrols. One night they ambushed another VC patrol coming through and they killed about three -- I don't know -- three or four VC. And what you normally did is they took the bodies up and laid them close to the road where the family could find them because most of these people were usually locals. And about two days later why this little old

man walked into this firebase and wanted to see the commander. And he said -- when he got there he said "I want to tell you, you killed my son about two nights ago." He said "I don't blame you. It wasn't your fault." He was there because the VC came in and took him and said if you don't function with us we'll kill your father. And he said he's dead now, they can't hurt me, and I'm going to tell you that this guy is a VC, this guy's a VC. He went through and pointed out all of the enemy. And I thought, you know, here's a guy that had every reason to be mad at us, and wasn't, that understood what was going on. The people back home are protesting and burning flags and, you know, that's why I don't have anything to do with reporters, you know.

TOBER: Right.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: But, yeah, I mean -- then I thought that was -- for a little old man to come in and say you killed my son and I don't hold it against you -- you know, he was doing what he didn't want to do and you were doing what you don't want to do.

TOBER: Right.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: But -- yeah. And there were all kinds of things that went on like that. But a little girl was brought into our hospital -- our evac hospital. And she was maybe 12-13 years old. And her father was Dai Uy of the area.

Dai Uy was -- he was usually a captain in the Vietnamese army, but he functioned as a mayor of an area. Anyway -- and that was his big thing as mayor.

Anyway, they were collecting taxes and paying taxes to the central government like they were supposed to. The VC came in and said you're going to pay taxes to us, and he had refused to do it. So one night they came in. Everybody is in bed in this village. He came in -- they came in, went into his house, and tied he and his wife to -- the Vietnamese houses are built on very large poles set in the ground in the middle of the house which supported the roof and everything and these things -- but anyway they tied both of them to the poles and then proceeded to rape his daughter, and then when they got through with her they used their rifles, butts of their rifles, to crush her legs. And I suspect -- I don't know but I think they -- it was reported they made some disparaging remarks. She ended up losing both of her legs, you know, because of what they had done to her. And it was simply because her father was who he was.

And, yeah, it's just -- the American people I don't think understood, you know, what was going on and it -- how we treated the people and how the VC treated them. It was -- it was strictly an intimidation thing.

TOBER: Right.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: And, yeah, there was a -- down in the Delta we went into -- the town we were in was a town of Ra Quan was the name of it. And when we went in there, why -- the day after Christmas and there wasn't anybody else. We were it. And, like I said, artillery couldn't reach you. Nobody could reach you.

Anyway, there was one old guy there, lost one eye, crippled in one arm and a leg and he had gotten it as a member of the Viet men fighting the French. Apparently he had been a -- lived in this little village for a long time. The village had kind of a main street and down in the middle of it was just -- it was a marketplace. It was a market town. And he said, yeah, he said the VC came in here several couple years ago and took over. And he said when they came in, why, they got all the people in this little town into the marketplace. And he said wanted to know who was in charge. So the mayor said, well, I'm in charge. So he said they took him over, put him against the wall, and shot him. They said, okay, now who's in charge. Well, they didn't learn fast enough. The guy, the vice mayor, raised his hand and said, well, you shot the mayor, so I guess I'm in charge. They grabbed him, stuck him against the wall, and shot him, and said now who's in charge. The third guy had learned his

lessen and said "you are". And everybody left town and moved to Saigon and came back down -- they came back down in the spring to plant their rice and came back in the fall to harvest it and -- but the rest of the time the town was deserted. But that's how, you know -- that's how they -- they governed, that's how they intimidated people, and -- but, you know -- so, yeah, I like a lot of people, I think, had a very bad taste in my mouth when we got back. So Jane Fonda is not one of my favorite actresses.

TOBER: My father-in-law is the same way.

Moving on here, a little lighter question, I guess. What was the food like while you were over there?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: A C ration is a C ration is a C ration. Actually, if you got back to base camp for awhile why, you know, the food was fine. I mean it was -- it was not the best but everything is relative.

TOBER: Yeah.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: If it wasn't C ration, it was pretty good.

TOBER: Did you always have plenty of supplies while you were there?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah. I don't -- I don't think -- you know, we didn't demand much. Like I said, I was in an infantry unit and we didn't spend that much time in a base

camp. Most of the time we were out somewhere and if we weren't out on a larger operation, then you were provided a little security outside, you know. We went outside the perimeter on patrols and that sort of thing. And -- but, yeah, I mean I -- I lost a lot of weight which I need to do again. But I was probably my healthiest when I came back. I probably lost about 20 pounds but I learned some very good lessons how to do it.

Well -- because what you did is if you're going to go, say, going to be out for like two days before you were resupplied, why they gave you that number of rations and you couldn't carry all of them because they all came in little cans. So what you did is you dumped them out and sorted through it, took out what, you know, and stuck them in a sock. You tied it to your belt. So you figured out how much you could get in boot socks.

Well, there were no time to stop. We didn't stop and eat meals. What you did is you walked along and we would stop for whatever reason, so you grab your sock, pull something out of it, and eat. And the upshot of it was all day you were never really hungry.

TOBER: Yeah.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: But you never ate that much and you got a lot of exercise. And so I was very healthy, but I lost

weight and that's -- the lesson I learned is that you're better off eating about four or five meals a day than you are two big ones or three big ones.

TOBER: Yeah. There's some truth to that.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: I guess there's a bright side.

TOBER: Did you have anything that you took with you or carried around for good luck?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: No, don't believe in it. No. No, that's a -- I don't believe -- I'm not superstitious nor do I believe it in, no.

TOBER: And if there were times where you guys -- for entertainment or anything, how did -- how did you entertain yourself while you were over there?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Drinking.

TOBER: Drinking?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: No. No, because there was -- you know, there was beer and that was about it. No, you -- I don't know. There really wasn't that much time for entertainment. We did have a TV, you know, that in the evening you could -- you could pick up a fuzzy picture from Saigon. The radio, the FM station, Good Morning Vietnam, yeah, that was -- I don't remember him but --

TOBER: Right.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: -- but, yeah, that was -- that was

about the best entertainment you had. Plenty of books. Everybody sent you paperback books. So if you were a reader why you had plenty of books to read.

Actually you didn't have that much time for entertainment. And I did see one show that came over, yeah, Jonathan Winters and Roy Clark were there. That was before Roy Clark was famous. But I got to tell you he was the most entertaining.

TOBER: Was he?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah. And Bob Hope came over, was there when -- while we were down in the Delta, and we draw straws, you know, a lottery. Two guys out of the company got to go. And, of course, the officers weren't eligible. They got to fly them back to the base camp to see Bob Hope. But other than that, why -- once in awhile there would be somebody, some troop would come through, but we usually weren't there.

TOBER: Yeah.

What did you do when you were on leave? Did you have leave or --

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: R and R.

TOBER: Yeah.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah, I managed to get just about a month or so before I came back, or rotated, why I did manage

to take an R and R. I went to Japan, yeah, and just went to Japan and enjoyed myself. Yeah, but that would be one episode that I would not want to get into.

TOBER: Yeah, that's fine. You don't have to.

I know you said you were in Germany. You were at Fort --

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Fort Leonard Wood.

TOBER: That's Missouri, right?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah.

TOBER: And did you travel anywhere else while you were in the service? I mean other than those two and obviously Vietnam.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah. Obviously went to Europe several times after -- you know, for exercises, and throughout the states. You know, I've been on the biggest part of military posts around here. Yeah, it -- but, no, once I got off active duty, why -- I was on active duty a little over five years -- five years, three months, and nine days to be exact -- 19 days, excuse me, as if I were counting.

TOBER: Yeah.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: But, you know, yeah, it was -- no, I did travel in Europe. I did get to take a leave over there and went down to Munich and I would recommend it. It was a lot of fun.

TOBER: Was it?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah. And Vienna. Unfortunately I had to go in the summertime and absolutely nothing happens in the summertime. The horses are gone. And the symphonies are not playing and all of those sorts of things. So --

TOBER: Do you recall any particular humorous or unusual events that happened during your time?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: I wouldn't call it humorous.

TOBER: Unusual also.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah. I've got to tell you it was -- it goes back to Vietnam. They -- like I said, as a unit we'd man the bunker lines at night and I'd usually man them with people who had been wounded and recovering or whatever reason they couldn't go in the field. You had very few people, you know, anyway. And this one young troop he was -- and I don't remember why he was back, but the battalion XO decided that they wanted to hold a guard mount. Ridiculous in the first place because I guarantee you people went down to the bunker line with all ammunition and everything they could carry and they were -- knew what their job was. But anyway he insisted that's what we had to do.

So three or four guys in my company, we were going to man our bunkers, went down to the battalion headquarters. We had built a little bit of what you would call an officers'

club. And he was sitting on a little wooden sidewalk with his M16. For whatever reason he put a magazine in his rifle. And in the process of doing that, the bolt of his rifle went forward, picked up a round and chambered it. And, you know, the kid was relatively new. He had been thinking more about it. Anyway, he reached up, took the magazine out to disarm the rifle, forgot that it had picked up a round. Put it back in his pouch and sitting there and on the officers' club wall -- what it was was just -- they were on stilts about so high and then there was a -- wooden panels, boards nailed across there, and one of them had a knot. And he used that knot as an aiming point. Just sitting there dry firing his rifle he thought. And he aimed at that knot and pulled the trigger and it went off.

Well, sitting on the other side of that little board was brigade commander, who was getting ready to rotate to the states, battalion XO, and battalion S3 -- two majors, and a bird colonel -- and he hit all three of them. He just about tore the thumb off of the brigade commander because he was sitting in such a way that it went past him. It went into the leg of the XO, broke his leg, the femur, and hit the S3, broke his leg, with one round.

TOBER: When you say missed -- it scared everybody, wow.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah, yeah. I said it's not really

funny --

TOBER: No, it isn't.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: -- but at the same time you think what are the odds that you could do that to all three people. And, yeah, a few days later I was down at the hospital visiting the wounded, walked into this ward, and there sat all three of them -- or laid all of three of them in bed. And I had been trying to avoid them.

TOBER: Yeah. Do you have any photos with you or anything that you would like to share or talk about?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: No, I don't.

TOBER: Sometimes people bring their photos.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah. No, I don't.

TOBER: Okay. Did you keep a personal diary --

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: No.

TOBER: -- of your time over there?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: No. Didn't really have time for that sort of thing.

TOBER: And I know you -- I had asked if you recalled the date of your service ended. I know you know to the day when your service ended. But where were you again when your service ended? Did you say?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: I was at Fort Leonard Wood when I got out.

TOBER: Okay.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah. Yeah, I --

TOBER: And then when you were done with service, what did you do in the days and weeks immediately afterwards?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: I went home. I mean I -- I wasn't married. I went home and went back to school.

TOBER: Okay. Went back to school. And then what did you do after your time in the service? Did you go back to work also?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah. I went to work for Illinois Power and I retired from there eventually.

TOBER: Okay.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah. But I -- when I went to work for Illinois Power, why I had joined a reserve unit down in Marion, Illinois, and then I -- when I came back up to Decatur, went to work for the power company. Then I transferred to a unit in Decatur and I was in the S4 and then in the -- what was it -- the S4 logistics, and then the logistics officer, and then the S3, then the XO, and then the battalion commander. And -- yeah, and the unit had -- I had four units, Rockford, Freeport, Joliet, and Danville, four other companies under us. Yeah -- and that's where I stayed until I --

TOBER: Okay.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: -- you know, it was a case either I got out or transferred to Chicago, which was not something I wanted to do, you know. My son had already told me that I didn't care because I didn't spend any time with him, you know, so --

TOBER: Yeah. Did you make any close friends while you -- with your time in the service and do you still maintain contact with anybody?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah, a number of -- a number of good friends and -- but I've only run into -- you know -- had a chance to talk to one of them since. They're from Georgia, California, wherever. I mean it's just, you know -- and the one guy that was close, lived here, lived close by, was killed down at Delta. And so -- a guy I went through OCS with down in Fort Benning. But, yeah, he was killed just shortly after I came back and never recovered. Rivers down in the Delta are -- you don't realize how flat the Delta is. The first morning I spent down there I went to bed and there was water in the rice patties and the next morning they were dry. The tide that -- you know, the tide came in why it would flood the rice patties. When the tide went out, all of these little streams that it had backed up in became roaring rivers, and he got caught while crossing one and was shot in the process.

They never did recover him. So -- because you cross those rivers when they -- the tide was going out you crossed them at your peril. So -- but, yeah, no, I have not. I have only run across one guy that I really -- yeah, there were a lot of people that I was good friends with over there. You -- you -- but -- I don't know. I just -- just haven't.

TOBER: Let's see. And it looks like you have joined -- you're part of the DAV, right?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Well, I'm part of the American Legion.

TOBER: Okay.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah.

TOBER: Is that the only veteran's organization then?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah. I only joined about two years ago. So --

TOBER: And did your military experience influence your thinking about war or military in general?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Well, no. I -- I -- I can't say that it has. I don't encourage war but it's a sort of thing that becomes inevitable sometimes.

I guess probably today what concerns me the most, and it started -- this attitude in this country started I think with Korea and was really manifested in Vietnam and I see it happening again now in a couple wars we've got going right now that we don't have the stomach to stay like we

should.

You know, Korea we invested an awful lot of life and treasure in that one and I know what we did in Vietnam and I know we were winning. One of my favorite T-shirts -- I never have found one for myself -- said -- you know the logo on it said "We were winning when I left." And that's true. Never lost one. Never lost a fight.

And so, yeah, I look at this thing if you're going to get into it, you know, you do it with both feet. We live in a -- probably the most prosperous, most powerful country in the world, and have been for a number of years, and we seem -- I don't know. We -- for whatever reason we can't flex our muscle and I don't suggest we go out and try and intimidate the world. But when you get into a fight, and if it's just, then do it. Don't mess around. And that's what we did over there.

I mean I have read the North Vietnamese general -- what's his name -- you know, he defected after the war and went -- moved to Paris and his comment was in an interview was that -- he said if you had kept it up, kept the bombing up, one more day, twice, we would have quit. He said but LBJ kept stopping, stop the bombing for awhile and see if they won't come to the table. He said if you had kept going -- because we had already decided if this goes one more day, we can't do

it, we can't sustain this. And -- so that's why I say, you know, that when you get in -- war is a terrible thing -- but when you get in it, you've got to get in it with both feet. And if you've got the biggest stick, then you'd better be prepared to use it, because I guarantee you he's going -- the other guy is going to. And war is not a political thing, you know, in that you're out of seized territory. I don't want to get on my soapbox about that sort of thing.

TOBER: That's okay. I think that's all the questions I had. So is there anything else you would like to add?

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: No. I guess, probably the only thing I would say, I don't know how this came about or anything like that but I do have to say I appreciate it. You know, it's -- it's just kind of nice that somebody -- you know, somebody does take a look at it. Not that anybody -- I don't think anybody that came over here with me today is looking for accolades in any way, shape, or form.

TOBER: It's nice.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: But it's kind of nice.

TOBER: It's nice to get this out there. This is part of our history.

BUECHSENSCHUETZ: Yeah. And I really wish -- I really wish somebody would take a real long hard look at a couple of these wars. I really would, you know, and somebody who is

willing to be objective about it and how we conduct them because we're going down that same path. So -- like I said, I don't want to get on my soapbox.

TOBER: Okay. Well, thanks for your time. I appreciate it.